

Kentucky among the best states for mothers

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If motherhood is in your future, Kentucky is among the Top 5 best states for mothers, according to an inaugural study released ahead of Mother's Day by Kremp Florist.

Kentucky is no slouch in our study, having ranked fifth overall," said Chad Kremp a researcher at Kremp Florist. "However, the state has the most room for improvement in four distinct categories: median annual earnings for women (Kentucky scored quite low with \$34,000), the state's school system (Kentucky ranked 21 out of 50), weeks of guaranteed parental leave (Kentucky only guarantees two weeks), and job protection for women who go out on maternity leave (Kentucky has no such guarantees the job will be saved)."

Kremp said the study took roughly three months to put together and is based on the following six authoritative data sources: The Institute for Women's Policy Research (women's median earnings, wage gap), the World Population Review (child care costs), The National Survey of Children's Health (mother's health, children's health, school safety), U.S. Census Bureau (population under the age of 18), WalletHub's States with the Best and Worst School Systems (school system scores, nationwide rank), and the Bipartisan Policy Center (paid family leave laws).

Massachusetts is the No. 1 state for mothers, with a score of 720.3, followed by Maryland (718.6), New Jersey (709.2), and Connecticut (705.3). Kentucky's score was 693.2. New Mexico was the worst state for mothers, with a score of 595.9.

"Some slight improvements in the four aforementioned categories could be the difference between fifth place and first place going into 2026," Kremp said.

One thing that Kentucky has going in its favor is the relatively low child-care costs: \$6,841 a year, well below the national average of \$9,955. Strong child health outcomes and a relatively young population also make it an ideal state to raise a family.

Even though the state only guarantees two weeks of mandatory leave, having those two paid weeks helped boost Kentucky's ranking because that is something most states still don't offer.

Maryland offers the highest women's median earnings at \$49,000, with Massa-

chusetts coming in at \$47,000, and New Jersey and Connecticut both at \$45,000. Kentucky's \$34,000 is the lowest of any of the top 10 states.

While states with higher wages may rank higher overall, many of them also struggle with very high childcare costs. In Massachusetts, for example, even though the median income for women is \$47,000, it also has the highest child-care costs in the country at more than \$16,000 per year. They, along with Maryland and New York, have narrower wage gaps and higher median incomes for women. In some states, childcare is more than 30% of a woman's average annual income spent solely on childcare. In Kentucky, childcare costs less than 20% of the median income.

Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware (No. 6), New York (No. 8), No. 15 Colorado, No. 16 Minnesota, No. 17 Washington, No. 24 Maine, and No. 30 Oregon all offer 12 weeks of paternal leave. Many states don't offer any or offer any job protections.

Connecticut leads the way in health considerations with 92% of children reported to be in excellent or very good health and 64.5% of mothers ranking their health similarly. In Kentucky, it's 90.9% and 55.3%, respectively.

Massachusetts leads in school system score and nationwide rank (74.36) and school safety (74.4%), while Kentucky is 21st in nationwide rank (54.28) and school safety (66.0%).

"Moms deserve the best possible support, and where they live directly impacts their experience of motherhood," the website says. "States that offer financial stability, strong health care systems, high-quality education, and supportive parental leave policies provide a more secure environment for families. Massachusetts, Maryland, and New Jersey rank among the best states for mothers, thanks to their strong performances across multiple categories. On the other hand, states like New Mexico and West Virginia still have much work to do, facing challenges in areas such as education quality and economic security."

Kremp said that this study is something they expect to continue to update for years to come.

To view the entire report, visit <https://www.kremp.com/pages/the-best-and-worst-states-to-be-a-mom>.



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